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**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE**

DIRECTOR OF INTELLIGENCE AND RESEARCH

*Intelligence  
Note*

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December 24, 1969

To : The Secretary  
Through: S/S  
From : INR - George C. Denney, Jr. *h.c.d.f.*  
Subject: MIDDLE EAST: Arab Summit Ends in Disarray

The Fifth Arab Summit Conference at Rabat (December 21-23), which the Arabs convened in high hopes and in an atmosphere relatively free of inter-Arab bilateral disputes, came to an ignominious end in apparently irreconcilable disagreement over the central issue of mobilization for an eventual full-scale war with Israel.

Fawzi's Proposals Unacceptable to Some. The summit foundered on the first agenda item--a three-year plan for military mobilization presented by UAR War Minister Fawzi. In addition to heavy requirements for men and material, the plan reportedly called for huge financial allocations for arms by present financial contributors (Libya, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia) and by other states (e.g., Algeria, Morocco) as well. The plan ran aground because of the Iraqi and Syrian demands for an all-out war against Israel now, attempts by the Algerians, Moroccans, and Tunisians to focus Arab efforts on support for the Palestinians, and Saudi and Kuwaiti unwillingness to increase their financial contributions. When Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia were clearly unwilling to commit themselves to the financial contributions envisioned by Fawzi's plan, Nasser staged his walk-out on December 23. The subsequent closed session failed to reach agreement; militant Syria, Iraq, and Southern Yemen boycotted the brief closing session.

Arab Disunity: A Mixed Blessing. The disunity at Rabat may push the possibility of another Mideast war further into the future, but it raises questions *(2)* about the possibilities for peace, since it removes some of the pressure for

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compromise from Israel and may make it even more difficult for individual Arab leaders to agree to a settlement. Furthermore, the conference results may pose problems for the Arab states which opposed the Fawzi plan, in the form of domestic discontent or of campaigns mounted by Arab radicals. Cairo media have already blamed the conference failure on states that "contended they could not offer more to the battle." It will not take long to discover whether we are on the verge of a renewed "cold war" among the Arabs, or whether the UAR's need for a continuation of the Khartoum subsidy payments will mute any major propaganda-subversion campaigns. The overall impact of the negative psychological reaction in the Arab world has not been felt yet. Nasser, may try to regain the initiative at the UAR-Libya-Sudan summit scheduled for December 25 in Tripoli. Though less likely, he has the option of using the Rabat meeting's failure to endorse war preparations as justification for renewed UAR attention to a political settlement.

The Fedayeen. Because of the conference's disorderly end, the remaining agenda items--support for the fedayeen and financial aid to Palestinians in the occupied areas--were not resolved. As a result, the Palestinian Liberation Organization apparently did not receive the collective Arab political backing it had sought nor its anticipated subsidy of about \$20 million per year, but it will probably get increased financial aid from some Arab states, and the overall effect of the summit's collapse on the guerrilla movement will probably be minor. Arafat apparently kept out of the disputes, and Fatah's avowed goal of avoiding subordination to any Arab state may be strengthened by the split at Rabat. The failure of the more grandiose military schemes may also enhance popular support for guerrilla activities.

The US Comes off Well. Recent US peace initiatives--Secretary Rogers' December 9 speech and the surfacing of US proposals for an Israel-Jordan peace

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as the Rabat conference opened--probably contributed to the Arab disarray at Rabat by casting doubt on the need for all-out sacrifices in preparation for "inevitable" war. The result was a double benefit for the US: because of our balanced position, the summit was not in the mood to be as critical of the US as expected; and the protracted talk and final breakdown over mobilization of Arab resources meant that the conference ended without an opportunity to turn to consideration of anti-US measures. In the wake of the conference, however, it is possible that extremists may turn to anti-American propaganda themes in their search for a scapegoat.

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